

ALL CARE HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This invention relates to managed health care systems and more particularly to managed health care systems which address health enhancement life styles, illness prevention, case management, illness treatment and post treatment monitoring and/or review; and which integrate physicians, medical care facilities, patients, insurance companies and/or other health care payers, employers and banks and/or other financial institutions.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A variety of medical payment systems have heretofore been proposed illustrative of which are those disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,491,725 granted to Lawrence E. Pritchard on Jan. 1, 1985 and in U.S. Pat. No. 4,858,121 which was granted to William B. Barber et al. on Aug. 15, 1989.

According to the proposals of the prior art, systems have been proposed which include one or more magnetic and manual entry data entry terminals at the health care provider facilities, various verification and authentication routines, data storage which includes lists of insurance companies or other payers together with lists of medical procedures for which such payers are obligated to make payments, schedules of permissible fees for such procedures and selected data related specifically to each covered patient.

Other proposals of the prior art have included examination of participants to determine their physical condition, identification of existing physical profiles and encouragement of changes in life styles, where indicated, to enhance the physical condition of the participant and to lessen the likelihood of the development of disease.

However, such systems have not heretofore featured the total health care function, for they have not integrated important elements of total health care such as comprehensive preventive health measures, the review of the necessity for implementing selected procedures including changes in life styles, the obtaining of second opinions, (i.e., utilization review/case management) and other functions contemplated by total health management such as ancillary services. Neither have they included integration of the active participation by a patient's employer or inclusion of a patients' own available cash balances. Accordingly, since these missing functions are important ingredients to extend proposals of the prior art to fully comprehensive medical care, there has continued to be a need for a system which provides full integration of each of the aforementioned activities.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The preferred embodiment of the present invention includes the integrated interconnection and interaction of the patient, health care provider, bank or other financial institution, utilization reviewer/case manager and employer so as to include within a single system each of the essential elements to provide patients with complete and comprehensive health care and payment therefor. It additionally contemplates, as an optional feature, the complete integration of all aspects of "wellness", that is, of the optimization of health-inducing diet and life style factors in combination with the aforementioned enhanced integrated diagnosis, treatment and post-treatment of illnesses when they do occur, and quality monitoring and enhancement systems including patterns of treatment protocols and diagnostic smart systems that

will serve as aids in treatment planning and diagnostic test selection.

OBJECTS AND FEATURES

It is one general object of this invention to provide a fully integrated health optimization system.

It is another object of this invention to improve medical treatment systems.

It is another object of the invention to provide a wholly integrated health care management system.

It is still another object of the invention to provide an integrated health care management system including interactive participation with patients' employers and banks.

It is still another object of the invention to include in an integrated health care management system the interactive participation of a utilization review for recommended medical procedures.

It is yet another object of the invention to integrate preventive medical programs with treatment programs, thereby to encompass the full gamut of health wellness.

Accordingly, in accordance with one feature of the invention, all of the elements of health enhancement are integrated, including customized planning, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, thus facilitating health wellness management, improving efficiency and reducing costs.

In accordance with the foregoing feature, integrated service is provided, thus reducing time, direct cost, and indirect cost often incurred through duplication of tests, excessive paperwork and inappropriate utilization, thus enhancing the ability of the system to provide quality health care through case management and physician interaction via smart systems.

In accordance with yet another feature of the invention, the planning and preventive aspects of health wellness includes the provision of customized recommendations for health-enhancing practices and for the periodic monitoring of participants' physical conditions, diets and life styles so as to identify and address incipient health problems and provide corrective measures before health problems develop.

In accordance with another feature of the invention, provision is made for health management of selected groups of participants as well as for individuals.

In accordance with still another feature of the invention, provision is made for integrated operation in both in-patient and out-patient modes of treatment.

In accordance with yet another feature of the invention, provision for integrated operation is provided for inclusion of ancillary services such as those provided by pharmacists, dentists, optometrists, audiologists and related laboratories.

In accordance with still another feature of the invention, the system is made flexible so that it is compatible with procedures required for implementing workmen's compensation processing.

In accordance with yet another feature of the invention, provision is made for optional precertification of patients and procedures, thus enhancing health care efficiency and reducing overhead costs.

In accordance with another feature of the invention, provision is made for patient discharge planning and monitoring.

In accordance with another feature of the invention, interactive communication links are provided with an integrated utilization review whereby for predetermined selected medical procedures proposed for imple-